



EPPUpdate

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ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING

New Purchase Agreement Makes Buying Green Office Supplies Easy

Buying green office supplies just got easier for EPA purchase card holders, thanks to a new agency-wide Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA). The BPA will create a one-stop-shop for office supplies, with a special emphasis on products that fulfill both the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for buying recycled-content items and the Executive Order (E.O.) 13101 mandate to purchase environmentally preferable products and services.

In the past, greening EPA's purchase card procurement was challenging. Card holders had to ask questions about the environmental attributes of the products they were buying every time they made a purchase, and hope vendors could supply the answers they needed to ensure they bought the greenest products available while meeting EPA's performance and cost expectations. "By buying office supplies through this new system, the big 'ifs' have been taken out of the process. When purchase card holders buy through this system, they are guaranteed to be buying products that meet federal green purchasing requirements (if products that meet these requirements are available)—and other government purchasing requirements as well. We've created a win-win green solution that will work for everyone," said Holly Elwood of EPA's EPP Team.

About BPAs

A BPA is a simplified method of filling anticipated, repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing a contract or contracts with qualified sources of supply. The new BPA gives EPA access to an online catalog that is tailored to meet the agency's specific purchasing needs through a pre-negotiated contract.

The BPA, which EPA's Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) awarded to Corporate Express in October 2003, will eventually become

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Highlights

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Environmentally Preferable Purchasing seeks the overall best value, taking into account price competitiveness, regulatory requirements, performance standards, and environmental impact. Because purchasers typically have clear sources of information on procurement and safety regulations and well-established methods for evaluating price and performance, the U.S. EPA EPP program has developed the *EPP Update* to help government purchasers consider the environmental factors in the EPP equation and to keep purchasers informed of EPP news. For more information about the EPP program's history, tools, and resources, please visit www.epa.gov/epp.

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mandatory at EPA offices nationwide by the end of FY 2004. It covers all non-electronic desktop supplies bought with a purchase card, such as process chlorine-free recycled-content paper (minimum 50 percent post-consumer content), nontoxic markers, rechargeable batteries, and remanufactured toner cartridges.

EPA conservatively estimates that in 2002 its agencywide contract purchases of recycled copy paper saved approximately 11,000 trees and contributed to solid waste reductions of more than 500,000 pounds. "Implementing the BPA will greatly increase these numbers by creating more ways for EPA employees to reduce waste and prevent pollution at work," says Karen Lee of EPA's National Purchase Card Program.

In addition to green products, the BPA conveniently includes products from mandatory sources of supplies for the federal government, such as small businesses and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) program (which promotes products made by the blind or severely handicapped).

The BPA also gives EPA access to group discounts on office products and allows for more efficient tracking of office supplies bought via purchase cards.

Corporate Express and EPA have set up a user-friendly e-catalog, www.epasupplies.com, which simplifies purchasing for EPA employees. Using the system is similar to purchasing anything online—purchase card holders just need to set up an account before they buy. The site also features a helpful hotline number, links to a training tutorial, and details about requesting onsite training offered by Corporate Express.

To see EPA's green office supply criteria and surf the e-catalog, visit www.epasupplies.com. For more information contact Holly Elwood at (202) 564-8854 or elwood.holly@epa.gov. To learn about other federal agencies' efforts to buy green office supplies, including EPA's RFP for the BPA, go to www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/buying_green_online.pdf.



The BPA is just one way EPA is fulfilling its goals for meeting the mandates of E.O. 13101. Visit www.epa.gov/epp/pilot/13101%20goals.htm for more information.

EPA's BPA Research Leads to *Buying Green Online* Report

To develop the e-catalog under the new BPA (see preceding article), EPA first identified and interviewed procurement and environmental staff from several government agencies that already have e-catalogs in place for purchasing office supplies. EPA has made the lessons learned via these interviews available in a report that can serve as a resource for federal agencies and others working to green their purchases through current or future BPAs. The report includes federal agency success stories, EPA's green criteria for office supplies, EPA's RFP language for its BPA, and a chart describing a range of federal office product e-catalogs.

To improve tracking of purchases and ensure they are taking advantage of requisite group discounts, some of the agency representatives EPA interviewed have made their agency's e-catalog the only authorized mechanism for the purchase of office supplies. Others have limited the products available via their e-catalog

to those that meet EPA's recycled content guidelines in an effort to increase the purchase and use of green products.

Although other government agencies have set up successful programs for encouraging the online purchase of green office products, EPA's green purchasing criteria, located in Appendix A of the aforementioned report, are more comprehensive than those of other agencies. EPA will modify and augment these green purchasing criteria as office products with additional positive environmental attributes become available. EPA's BPA also requires recycling of all used toner cartridges and batteries. Vendor evaluation criteria used in the award of the BPA included having an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place or in development and having green fleet purchase and maintenance programs.

To view EPA's *Buying Green Online Report*, visit <www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/buying_green_online.pdf>.

According to federal agency staff interviewed for *Buying Green Online: Greening Government E-Procurement of Office Supplies*, the benefits of buying office supplies through BPAs include:

- Cost savings through group discounts.
- Reduced time spent on routine processing of orders.
- Improved tracking and monitoring capabilities.
- Increased availability of up-to-date product information.
- Ease of use.
- Increased ability to meet mandatory source-of-supply requirements.
- Increased ability to meet agency-specific purchasing goals.
- Improved satisfaction of customers and procurement professionals.

Agencies successful in greening the product offerings in their agency-specific e-catalogs cited the following drivers for their green procurement programs:

1. Legal requirements.
2. Improved access to green products.
3. Increased purchase of green products.
4. Improved tracking and monitoring of green purchases.
5. Improved environmental performance for the agency.

Setting the Standard for Sustainability

Over the past few years, the building design and construction communities have made substantial efforts to incorporate sustainability into their practices to reduce the environmental impact of development. In December 2003, ASTM International (formerly the American Society for Testing and Materials) Committee E6 on Performance of Buildings, Subcommittee E6.71 on Sustainability, demonstrated a commitment to green building by finalizing revisions to Standard E2129—"Standard Practice for Data Collection for Sustainability Assessment of Building Products." The revised standard is intended to facilitate the dialogue on sustainability issues among a variety of building professionals, including:

- Planners
- Developers
- Architects
- Engineers
- Interior designers
- Contractors
- Building materials and product manufacturers

Specifically, the standard features a comprehensive questionnaire, organized by the Construction Specifications Institute's MasterFormat™. Responses will help the user assess the overall environmental sustainability of specific building products such as concrete, masonry, insulation, wood, sealants, HVAC systems, and floor coverings.

EPA hopes the revised standard will enable the building industry to push sustainable building design and construction to new limits. "This standard and others

demonstrate ASTM's tremendous contribution to the advancement of sustainable building. ASTM is developing invaluable resources for federal agencies as they strive to meet mandates under the Greening the Government Executive Orders and the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act," said Alison Kinn Bennett, sustainable building project manager for EPA's EPP Program, who chaired the Data Collection Task Group that developed this standard.

Additional efforts by ASTM's Subcommittee on Sustainability include a standard on environmentally preferable product specifications and a guide that identifies the general principles of sustainability relative to buildings. To learn more about these ASTM Standards, contact Alison Kinn Bennett at (202) 564-8859 or <kinn.alison@epa.gov>.

About ASTM

ASTM is a nonprofit organization comprised of more than 30,000 individuals from 100 nations. Since 1898, ASTM has provided a global forum for the development and publication of voluntary consensus standards, which serve as the basis for manufacturing, research and development, product testing, procurement, and regulatory activities around the world. For nearly five years, EPA's EPP Program has worked with ASTM to develop an array of environmental standards. To learn more about ASTM standards development, visit their Web site at <www.astm.org>.

DOE Database Provides Valuable Sustainable Buildings Information

Interested in real world successes and lessons learned from sustainable building design? The Department of Energy's (DOE's) High Performance Buildings (HPB) Database provides public access to case study data on more than 40 high performance buildings worldwide. The database, launched in May 2002, is a centralized clearinghouse showcasing projects—from office buildings to campuses and whole neighborhoods—that have incorporated sustainable design principles. Information on facilities appears in a standard format, with details

ranging from a basic overview to detailed cost and performance data. The HPB Database continues to grow in size and scope, developing into a resource that DOE hopes will ultimately improve building performance nationally and globally. Search the database at <www.highperformancebuildings.gov/case_studies>.

For more information, please contact Drury Crawley of DOE's Building Technologies Program at (202) 586-2344 or <drury.crawley@ee.doe.gov>.

CIC Offers New Green Meeting Guidelines

The list of green meetings tools continues to grow. The Convention Industry Council (CIC) recently issued its *Green Meetings*

Report—a document outlining best practice guidelines for meeting organizers and event suppliers to assist them with making their events sustainable. The best practices cover all aspects of meeting/convention planning, including selecting destinations, accommodations, food and beverage services, and transportation providers.

CIC's Green Meetings Task Force—a group composed of individuals from EPA, the Oceans Blue Foundation, the Society of Incentive & Travel Executive's Green Meeting Group, the World Travel Organization, hotels, convention and visitor bureaus, convention centers, and meeting planning organizations—compiled the guidelines.

For more information, or to download a free copy of the *Green Meetings Report*, visit the CIC Web site at <www.conventionindustry.org>.



For Green Vendors, Opportunity Knocks

Now, more than ever, the federal government is considering the environmental impacts of its purchasing decisions. It's not surprising, therefore, that most vendors of environmentally preferable products are eager to sell their products to the federal government. Unfortunately, many companies, particularly those of small or medium size, find marketing and selling their products to the federal government daunting. Things are changing, however; there is now a wide variety of information available on government contracting programs, catalogs, solicitations, and other important procurement initiatives to assist vendors in entering the federal marketplace.

Federal Procurement Opportunities for "Green" Vendors contains resources that can help vendors increase their federal government procurement opportunities and enhance prime and subcontract level competition. The document was produced by the Buy Bio program, which works to develop strategies for leveraging the federal government's purchasing power in order to promote the procurement of biobased products and bioenergy. View the publication online at <www.ofee.gov/gp/GreenVendors_ReadSprd.pdf>.

A faint, light blue map of North America serves as a background for the entire page. It shows the outlines of the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Members of the NAGPI steering committee represent the following organizations:

- Center for a New American Dream
- City of Santa Monica
- City of Toronto
- Commission for Environmental Cooperation
- Consumer's Choice Council
- Environment Canada
- Green Mountain College
- Inform, Inc.
- Interface Flooring
- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives World Secretariat
- Mexico's Office of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources
- TerraChoice Environmental Services Inc.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Office of the Federal Environmental Executive

EPP Beyond Borders

In the United States, the federal government, as well as many local and state governments, have long been incorporating environmentally preferable purchasing into their policies and practices. Now a broader coalition is working to spread the green purchasing message at an international level. Since 2002, the North American Green Purchasing Initiative (NAGPI) has been bringing together officials from Canada, Mexico, and the United States to work towards forming green purchasing initiatives that transcend national boundaries.

Housed at the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), which is headquartered in Canada, NAGPI is led by a steering committee made up of major organizations and governmental agencies (see sidebar) working to promote green purchasing in North America. NAGPI plays a coordinating role among these organizations by:

- Compiling and maintaining a list of ongoing green purchasing activities to avoid duplicate efforts.

- Creating a unified voice to engage manufacturers, purchasers, politicians, the media, and the general public.
- Developing and maintaining a database of tools and procurement policies used across North America.
- Identifying research needs (e.g., the need to better quantify environmental benefits of green purchasing) and seeking funding to address those needs.
- Facilitating the development of a common marketing language beneficial to all.
- Launching coordinated campaigns to improve the performance of specific commodity areas.

Currently, NAGPI is developing the Eco-S.A.T., an environmental purchasing self-assessment tool designed to help professional purchasers evaluate their organization's overall environmental purchasing initiatives and identify opportunities for improvement. Visit www.nagpi.net for more information.

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Guides, which were put on hold in 2002, may be making a return appearance! EPA has opened a public review and comment period for four guides:

- Greening Your Meetings and Conferences
- Greening Your Purchase of Carpet
- Greening Your Purchase of Copiers
- Greening Your Purchase of Cleaning Products

The EPP Guides contain information about the environmental impacts of purchasing decisions and outline how government agencies can identify and purchase environmentally preferable products.

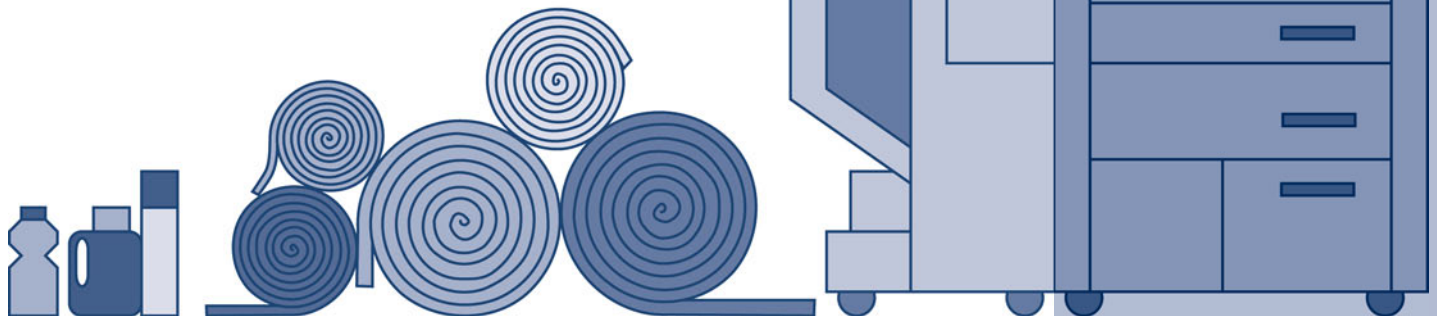
This public comment period will provide stakeholders with another opportunity to share their thoughts on the information presented in the guides. More information is available in the Federal Register notice entitled "EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program Announces Review and Comment Period for Four Draft Purchasing Guides," which was published on June 30, 2004. View the entire Federal Register notice at www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-TOX/2004/June/Day-30/t14831.htm.

Interested parties have until August

30, 2004, to provide comments. The preferred method for submitting a comment is through the EPA Docket, which can be accessed at www.epa.gov/edocket, and then entering docket number OPPT-2002-0039. Comments may also be e-mailed to oppt.ncic@epa.gov. EPA would like comments to address the following questions:

1. Is the discussion on the potential environmental impacts of the product categories useful for federal purchasers?
2. Is there any more recent information that is germane to or would enhance the discussion of these product categories?
3. Can federal purchasers act easily upon the stated recommendations in the product guides?
4. Is this an approach you would like EPA to take in addressing EPP?

For more information on the EPP Guides and the public comment period, contact Terry Grogan at (202) 564-6317 or grogan.terry@epa.gov



Setting a Standard for Purchasing Electronics

Having trouble choosing environmentally preferable electronic equipment? A new tool will soon make it easier to decide! Although still in the conceptual and developmental stage, the Electronics Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) will help guide environmentally preferable purchasing decisions by providing federal and state procurement officials with an easy-to-use rating system for environmental attributes of electronic products, such as computers. This informative and innovative system will not only assist federal and state purchasing decisions, but will also increase demand for green electronics. The project is a joint venture between

EPA and other federal agencies, leading electronics manufacturing companies, electronics trade associations, environmental organizations, and academic institutions. For more information, contact Christopher Kent at (202) 564-8842 or <kent.christopher@epa.gov>.



Pollution Prevention and Toxics
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